

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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January 28, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

From: Henry A. Kissinger *K*

Subject: Dr. Glenn Seaborg's Appointment, 3:30 pm, Today

Dr. Seaborg has indicated that the purpose of his meeting with you at 3:30 today is to call to your attention certain recent developments in the field of nuclear weapons that you should know about before you take action on the Non-Proliferation Treaty and other questions involving security affairs. I have been unable to find out anything about the nature of the developments he has in mind.

In view of the subject matter, I believe that Dr. Seaborg might bring up some of the following subjects which are currently of concern to the AEC:

1. The Non-Proliferation Treaty. The AEC supports the NPT and has been involved in the negotiations, particularly with regard to the safeguard provisions. Dr. Seaborg may believe, therefore, that he should be involved in the NSC review of this question on Wednesday.
2. Command and Control of Nuclear Weapons. Procedures for the release of nuclear weapons and other sensitive questions of command and control have been handled directly between the President and the Department of Defense. The AEC, which has been specifically excluded in the past, would like to be advised of and be involved in these procedures. (I see no need for this.)
3. ABM Deployment. Strong local opposition is developing to the deployment of SENTINEL ABM sites in the immediate vicinity of large cities -- specifically Chicago and Boston. This has raised questions concerning the requirement for such close-in deployments and the need to reassure the public as to the safety of the weapons.
4. Large-Yield Underground Tests. There is considerable public concern over the safety of large-yield (megaton) underground nuclear tests. Moreover, an ad hoc panel of the Office of Science and Technology under the chairmanship of Dr. Kenneth Pitzer, new president of Stanford,

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concluded in a report to President Johnson last November that, on the basis of new evidence, there is a possibility that a megaton-size underground nuclear explosion might induce earthquakes of sufficiently large magnitude to cause serious damage beyond the limits of the test site. The panel recommended that the need for each future large-yield test be given new consideration in the light of this information.

5. Nuclear Excavation. The Australians want to construct a new harbor in northwestern Australia using US nuclear explosives as a pilot project in the development of nuclear excavation technology. This subject is of great interest to the AEC in connection with the development of nuclear excavation technology which might lead to construction of a sea-level Atlantic-Pacific canal with nuclear explosives. However, there is a serious complication, since this project could presumably not be undertaken without an amendment to the Limited Test Ban Treaty. In this connection, the Soviets, on January 21, gave us an aide memoire reporting that they had detected radioactivity in the USSR from the US excavation shot, SCHOONER, conducted in Nevada in December, 1968, and stating that this constituted a violation of the Limited Test Ban Treaty.

6. Chairmanship of the AEC. Dr. Seaborg may also wish to discuss your wishes with regard to the future chairmanship of the AEC. (All members of the Commission serve for fixed terms. However, the President has the right to name the Chairman. Unless one of the present members of the Commission resigns, you must name the Chairman from those already on the Commission.)

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